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Our Bimonthly Newsletter includes websites from the Electronic Documentation Service, a mechanism for identifying and delivering authoritative but often hard-to-locate and soon-out-of-print reports by a number of different government agencies and private think tanks. **Some links may need to be copied and pasted.**

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DEMOCRACY

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 2008: DRAFT COUNTRY REPORTS. Freedom House. Web posted May 1, 2008
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fop08/CountryReportsFOTP2008.pdf> [PDF format, 239 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

According to the study, global press freedom underwent a decline in 2007, with journalists struggling to work in increasingly hostile environments in almost every region in the world. The decline continues a six-year negative trend. However, there was some improvement in the regions with the least amount of press freedom: the Middle East and North Africa. The study attributes the improvement to a growing number of journalists who were willing to challenge government restraints.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATURAL DISASTERS. Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, Brookings Institution. Web posted May 12, 2008
http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/spring_natural_disasters/spring_natural_disasters.pdf [PDF format, 93 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Although disasters could happen suddenly, their consequences can be long to remedy and can linger on for months and years. The effects can increase inequalities in life and society. Therefore, it is important to review how governments and humanitarian efforts integrate human rights into their disaster preparedness and response. Human rights have to be the basis for all humanitarian work pertaining to natural disasters. If humanitarian assistance is not based on a human rights framework, there is a risk that the focus will be too narrow and the basic needs of the victims will not be integrated into a holistic planning process. In order to provide guidance on how to protect the rights of individuals affected by natural disasters, the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted *Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters* and *Human Rights and Natural Disasters* is drafted as an accompaniment to the IASC guidelines.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND AMERICAN DIPLOMACY: BACKGROUND AND ISSUES FOR CONGRESS. Congressional Research Service, RL34503, Library of Congress. Deborah D. Stine. Web posted June 9, 2008
<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34503.pdf> [PDF format, 13 pages]

Science and engineering activities have always been international. Scientists, engineers, and health professionals frequently communicate and cooperate with one another without regard to national boundaries. The report discusses international science and technology (S&T) diplomacy, instances when American leadership in S&T is used as a diplomatic tool. It enhances another country's development and improves understanding by other nations of U.S. values and ways of doing business. The five developmental challenges where S&T could play a role include child health and child survival, safe water, agricultural research to reduce hunger and poverty, micro-economic reform, and mitigation of natural disasters.

THE INTERNET AND THE 2008 ELECTION. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Aaron Smith and Lee Rainie. June 15, 2008.

http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_2008_election.pdf [PDF format, 27 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

A record-breaking 46% of Americans have used the internet, email or cell phone text messaging to get news about the campaign, share their views and mobilize others. A significant number of voters are also using the internet to gain access to campaign events and primary documents. Online activism using social media has also grown substantially since the first time we probed this issue during the 2006 midterm elections. Yet despite the growth in the number of people who are politically engaged online, internet users express some ambivalence about the role of the internet in the campaign. On one hand, 28% of wired Americans say that the internet makes them feel more personally connected to the campaign, and 22% say that they would not be as involved in the campaign if not for the internet. At the same time, however, even larger numbers feel that the internet magnifies the most extreme viewpoints and is a source of misinformation for many voters.

WORST OF THE WORST: THE WORLD'S MOST REPRESSIVE SOCIETIES 2008. Freedom House. May 2008

http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/62.pdf [PDF format, 124 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Worst of the Worst examines civil liberties and political rights in 17 countries and three territories. Increased corruption and controls on nongovernmental organizations placed Chad on a list of the world's most repressive societies for the first time. Chad replaced Côte d'Ivoire, which saw an improvement in its status after a 2007 peace agreement brought ruling party and rebel leaders into a coalition government. On the other hand, Chad's status declined as the government diverted oil revenues away from poverty alleviation toward security and sought to limit the activities of nongovernmental organizations, including the World Food Programme.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

A GENDERED ASSESSMENT OF THE BRAIN DRAIN. Policy Research Working Paper, World Bank. Frederic Docquier et al. May 2008

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2008/05/06/000158349_20080506085333/Rended/PDF/wps4613.pdf [PDF format, 34 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The authors use homogenized definitions of what a migrant is and compute gender-disaggregated indicators of the brain drain. Emigration stocks and rates are provided by level of education and gender for 195 countries in 1990 and 2000. The data set is used to capture the recent trend in women's skilled migration and to analyze its causes and consequences for developing countries. The findings show that women represent an increasing share of the OECD immigration stock and exhibit higher rates of brain drain than men. The gender gap in skilled migration is strongly correlated with the gender gap in educational level.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CABLE INDUSTRY'S IMPACT ON THE U.S. ECONOMY. Bortz Media & Sports Group, Inc. Web posted June 13, 2008

<http://www.ncta.com/DocumentBinary.aspx?id=743> [PDF format, 54 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The U.S. cable industry accounts for 1.5 million jobs in all 50 states representing almost \$62 billion in personal income and a gross economic output of nearly \$227 billion, according to study. In addition, it concludes that between 2002–2007, direct and indirect employment attributable to the cable industry increased by almost 367,000 jobs, which amounts to nearly five percent of all net new jobs created by the U.S. economy during that five-year period. A major source of the industry's job growth and economic impact can be attributed its aggressive re-investment of capital, \$130 billion since 1996, to develop the nation's most widely available broadband infrastructure.

AN EXPLORATION OF TECHNOLOGY DIFFUSION. Harvard Business School Working Papers. Diego A. Comin and Bart Hobijn. Web posted April 30, 2008

<http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/08-093.pdf> [PDF format, 48 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

How long are technology adoption lags? Can cross-country differences in technology adoption lags account for a significant fraction of cross-country GDP disparities? This paper examines the diffusion process of individual technologies and the consequences that this has for aggregate growth. The model presented here looks at 15 technologies in 166 countries.

ARE PEOPLE CLAIMING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS LATER? Center for Retirement Research, Boston College. Dan Muldon and Richard W. Kopcke. June 2008.

http://crr.bc.edu/images/stories/ib_8-7.pdf [PDF format, 5 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The retirement income system, comprising Social Security and employer-sponsored pension plans, is contracting. To compensate, people need to work longer to ensure an adequate income over many years throughout retirement. A few additional years in the labor force can make a big difference. Working longer directly increases current income; it avoids the actuarial reduction in Social Security benefits; it allows people to contribute more to their 401(k) plans; and it shortens the period of retirement. People have begun to respond. The long-term trend toward earlier retirement ages came to a halt in the mid-1980s, and labor force participation rates at older ages began to increase in the mid-1990s.

CAPITAL BUDGETING. Congressional Budget Office. May 2008.

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/91xx/doc9167/05-08-Capital.pdf> [PDF format, 25 pages]

This paper analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a capital budget at the federal level. The federal budget presents the government's expenditures and revenues for each fiscal year, enabling policymakers to allocate resources to serve national objectives. One approach would be to create a category for capital spending as part of a restoration of the statutory budget enforcement procedures. Such a category within overall discretionary spending limits could help highlight important policy goals. Another alternative, which would address concerns about the management of assets rather than their reporting in the budget, might be to attribute a portion of the cost of assets each year to the programs that use them. Requiring users to pay the costs might improve incentives for agencies to sell assets that are no longer appropriate to their needs.

ENERGY IN DANGER: IRAN, OIL, AND THE WEST. Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Simon Henderson. June 2008

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/download.php?file=PolicyFocus83.pdf> [PDF format, 36 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Every day, nearly 40 percent of the world's internationally traded oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow channel over which Iran holds distinct military advantages. Given that the global economy is predicted to become even more dependent on Middle Eastern energy supplies in the coming decades, Iran's potentially critical influence on the flow of these supplies must be addressed. The author analyzes how the United States and its allies can loosen, or even bypass, the Strait of Hormuz chokepoint.

EVALUATING THE POTENTIAL FOR A RECESSION IN 2008. Congressional Research Service, RL34484, Library of Congress. Marc Labonte. May 13, 2008

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34484_20080513.pdf [PDF format, 24 pages]

The U.S. economy has faced some bad news lately. The housing boom has come to an abrupt halt, and housing sales and house building have been falling at double digit rates. Financial institutions have written off large losses because of falling asset values, particularly for mortgage-backed securities. It is therefore not surprising that consumer confidence is at a five-year low. A look at the available data suggests that economic growth has slowed considerably, but it is too soon to tell if the economy has entered a recession. Recessions are defined as prolonged and sustained declines in economic activity, so by definition, a persistent downturn cannot be identified until it has persisted. Given the lags between policy changes and their effects on the economy, the economy has not yet felt the full impact of the stimulus package and the Federal Reserve's actions. Therefore, it is still too early to tell.

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS. Congressional Research Service, RS21857, Library of Congress. James K. Jackson. Web posted May 20, 2008

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS21857_20080319.pdf [PDF format, 6 pages]

Foreign direct investment in the United States declined sharply after 2000, when a record \$300 billion was invested in U.S. businesses and real estate. In 2006, according to Department of Commerce data, foreigners invested \$184 billion. Foreign direct investments are highly sought after by many State and local governments that are struggling to create additional jobs in their regions. While some in Congress encourage such investment to offset the perceived negative economic effects of U.S. firms investing abroad, others are concerned about foreign acquisitions of U.S. firms that are considered essential to U.S. national and economic security.

GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE RECENT INCREASE IN FOOD COMMODITY PRICES. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ronald Trostle. Web posted May 2, 2008.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0801/WRS0801.pdf> [PDF format, 30 pages]

World market prices for major food commodities have risen sharply, to historic highs of more than 60 percent above levels just 2 years ago. Some reasons are slower growth in production and more rapid growth in demand. Increased global demand for biofuels, feed stocks, and adverse weather conditions in the last two years in some major grain- and oilseed-producing areas are other contributing factors. The declining value of the U.S. dollar, rising energy prices and increasing agricultural production costs have also led to food commodity price inflation.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC GLOOM – CHINA AND INDIA NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS. Pew Research Center. Andrew Kohut et al. June 12, 2008

<http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/260.pdf> [PDF format, 150 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The survey of more than 24,000 people in 24 countries reveals that slumping economic conditions is a major concern for the people around the world. Most people in 18 of the 24 countries surveyed describe current economic conditions in their country as bad. Assessments have worsened over the past year among countries surveyed in both this year and 2007. The median percentage rating their national economy as bad rose from 50% in 2007 to 61% in the current poll. The proportion of respondents expressing a positive view of their nation's economy has declined in 14 of the 22 countries since last year.

HELPING DISCONNECTED SINGLE MOTHERS. Center on Children and Families, Brookings Institution. Rebecca Blank and Brian Kovak. May 2008

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/05_single_mothers_blank/05_single_mothers_blank.pdf [PDF format, 8 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Recent research has identified a growing number of low-income single mothers who tend to be very poor and face serious barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency for their families. This group includes long-term welfare recipients as well as those who left welfare without stable employment, often referred to as "the disconnected."

Compared to women who left welfare and are working, “the disconnected” tend to have more barriers to employment, with less education, younger children, higher rates of mental and physical health problems, higher rates of substance abuse, and a greater history of domestic violence. This brief recommends the development of a Temporary and Partial Work Waiver Program (TPWWP) to assist disconnected single mothers who face multiple barriers to securing and sustaining employment.

HOW THE INCOME TAX TREATMENT OF SAVING AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS MAY AFFECT BOOMERS’ RETIREMENT INCOMES. Urban Institute. Barbara A. Butrica et al. Web posted May 17, 2008.

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411629_retirement_income.pdf [PDF format, 51 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Income tax provisions affect the buildup of retirement assets during workers' careers and after-tax income following retirement. Changes in the income thresholds for taxing Social Security benefits have the largest impact on middle-income boomers, while changes in contribution limits for retirement saving plans and tax rates on capital gains and dividends have the largest impact on the highest-income boomers. Although much of the baby boom generation will be better off than those retiring today, many face uncertain prospects. Especially vulnerable are divorced women, single mothers, never-married men, high school dropouts, and lower-income African-Americans and Hispanics. Butrica and other researchers assess how current retirement policies, demographic trends, and private sector practices influence older Americans' security and decision-making.

HUMAN CAPITAL AND WOMEN’S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP. U.S. Small Business Administration. Darrene Hackler et al. Web posted April 28, 2008

<http://www.sba.gov/advo/research/rs323tot.pdf> [PDF format, 75 pages]

Self-employed women differ from their wage and salary earning counterparts in several human capital areas. The self-employed women tend to be older, are better educated, and have more managerial experience than wage and salary earners. “Human capital factors such as education and experience have long been known to have a positive correlation with entrepreneurship,” said Dr. Chad Moutray, Chief Economist for the Office of Advocacy.

MAKING TRADE WORK FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development. May 2008

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/4/40672245.pdf> [PDF format, 8 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Adapting to change is vital for success in the modern global economy, for individuals, companies, industries and regions. New technologies breed new industries, and freer trade leads to new markets as well as global competition. An adaptation to structural change is necessary for economies to reap the benefits of new technologies and emerging market opportunities. Discussion of economic gains and costs from increased trade liberalization often focuses on developed countries, but developing countries have also undertaken significant trade liberalization in the past 20 years as they saw that it could boost economic growth. Some countries have benefited more than others from trade reforms, however, and there are lessons to be learnt from these experiences.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING: AMERICAN JOBS AND THE RISE OF SERVICE OUTSOURCING TO CHINA AND INDIA.

National Bureau of Economic Research. Runjuan Liu and Daniel Treffer. June 2008

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w14061.pdf> [PDF format, 64 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The study examines the impact on U.S. labor markets of offshore outsourcing in services to China and India. It also considers the reverse flow or 'in shoring' which is the sale of services produced in the United States to unaffiliated buyers in China and India. The impacts on occupation and industry switching, weeks spent unemployed as a share of weeks in the labor force, and earnings are analyzed. The results indicate that there are small positive effects of in shoring and smaller negative effects of offshore outsourcing.

OIL INDUSTRY PROFIT REVIEW 2007. Congressional Research Service, RL34437, Library of Congress. Robert Pirog. Web posted April 28, 2008

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34437_20080404.pdf [PDF format, 11 pages]

Increases in the price of crude oil pushed the spot price of West Texas Intermediate (WTI), to nearly \$100 per barrel in the third quarter of 2007. It remained high as the demand growth in China, India, and other parts of the developing world continued. The political unrest in Nigeria, Venezuela, Iraq, and other suppliers continued to threaten the market. The decline of the value of the U.S. dollar on world currency markets has also been identified by some as a factor in the high price of oil. The profits of the five major integrated oil companies remained high in 2007, as they generally accounted for approximately 75% of both revenues and net incomes. At the same time, independent refiners and marketers experienced a difficult year that was reflected in profits in 2007. The potential volatility of the world oil and financial markets, coupled with the weakness of the U.S. and other economies, makes any profit forecast for 2008 highly speculative.

OPEC REVENUES FACT SHEET. Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy. Web posted May 6, 2008.

http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/OPEC_Revenues/pdf.pdf [PDF format, 3 pages]

Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates that members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) earned \$674 billion in net oil export revenues in 2007, a 10 percent increase from 2006. Saudi Arabia earned the largest share of these earnings, \$194 billion, representing 29 percent of total OPEC revenues. On a per-capita basis, OPEC net oil export earning reached \$1,143, an 8 percent increase from 2006. Based on projections from the EIA May 2008 [Short Term Energy Outlook](#) (STEO), OPEC net oil export revenues could be \$1,060 billion in 2008 and \$990 billion in 2009.

PHILANTHROPY ANNUAL: 2007 REVIEW. Foundation Center. Web posted May 2, 2008

<http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/philanthropy2007/philanthropyannual2007.pdf> [PDF format, 100 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The Foundation Center has released *Philanthropy Annual: 2007 Review*, a new annual publication that highlights the news, issues, people, organizations, and giving trends that are shaping the philanthropic field. The focus includes, topical issues covered in the mainstream and philanthropic press, news of individuals who have dedicated their professional lives to working for the public good, in-depth interviews and commentary from widely respected leaders and thinkers, a sampling of books, periodicals, and blogs in the field, and key statistical information about U.S. grant making.

RISING FOOD PRICES AND GLOBAL FOOD NEEDS: THE U.S. RESPONSE. Congressional Research Service, RL34478, Library of Congress. Charles E. Hanrahan. Web posted May 18, 2008

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34478_20080508.pdf [PDF format, 22 pages]

Rising food prices are having impacts across the world, but especially among poor people in low-income developing countries. Since 2000, wheat prices in international markets have more than tripled, corn prices have doubled, and rice prices rose to unprecedented levels in March 2008. Such increases in food prices have raised concerns about the ability of poor people to meet their food and nutrition needs and in a number of countries have lead to civil unrest. More than 33 countries, most of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa are particularly affected by food prices increases. Rising oil and energy prices have affected all levels of the food production and marketing chain from fertilizer costs to harvesting, transporting and processing food. The World Bank and USAID are two aid agencies that are promoting agricultural development and growth in low-income countries. Both indicate that African agricultural development should be a priority.

THE AMERICA COMPETES ACT AND THE FY2009 BUDGET. Congressional Research Service, RL34396, Library of Congress. Deborah D. Stine. Web posted May 9, 2008

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34396_20080320.pdf [PDF format, 21 pages]

The America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69) responds to concerns that the United States may not be able to compete economically with other nations in the future due to insufficient investment today in science and technology research and in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. In March 2008, both the House and Senate included, in their budget resolutions, support for the America COMPETES Act. The act authorizes

increases in the nation's investment in science and engineering research at the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) laboratories, and the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science.

THE DISCRETE CHARM OF THE WASHINGTON CONSENSUS. The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College. Jan Kregel. Web posted May 1, 2008

http://www.levy.org/pubs/wp_533.pdf [PDF format, 24 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

According to Jan Kregel, in the last two centuries in Latin America, a Washington Consensus development strategy based on integration in the global trading system has dominated both domestic demand management and industrialization from within. The paper looks at the performance of each from the impact of external conditions and the validity of its underlying theory. It concludes that replacing the Consensus will require not only reform of the international financial architecture but also a return to the integrated policy framework represented in the Havana Charter.

THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE: HISTORY, PERSPECTIVES, AND ISSUES. Congressional Research Service, RL33341, Library of Congress. Robert Bamberger. Web posted June 17, 2008

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL33341.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages]

Congress authorized the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) in the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to help prevent a repetition of the economic dislocation caused by the 1973-1974 Arab oil embargo. The capacity of the SPR is 727 million barrels, and it currently holds around 704 million barrels of crude oil. In addition, a Northeast Heating Oil Reserve (NHOR) holds 2 million barrels of heating oil in above-ground storage. The issue in recent years has been whether SPR capacity should be expanded and whether the reserve should continue to be filled. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT) required expansion of the SPR to its authorized maximum of 1 billion barrels.

TRADE, THE ECONOMY AND SMALL BUSINESS. Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. Web posted June 6, 2008

<http://www.sbecouncil.org/uploads/SBEC%20polseries%2031%20-%20TradeEconomy.pdf> [PDF format, 12 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The study explains the economics of free trade, the ills of protectionism, and corrects mistaken thinking on such issues as imports and trade deficits. It also reveals the tremendous economic benefits that have resulted from NAFTA, including a 236% increase in U.S. goods exports to Mexico from 1992 to 2007, compared to inflation running at 39% over the same period. The report highlights the economic benefits of expanded trade with the three nations, Colombia, South Korea and Panama, the U.S. has pending free trade deals.

UNDERSTANDING STAGFLATION AND THE RISK OF ITS RECURRENCE. Congressional Research Service, RL34428, Library of Congress. Brian W. Cashell and Marc Labonte. Web posted April 28, 2008

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34428_20080331.pdf [PDF format, 17 pages]

The slowing of economic growth and the rising rate of inflation have given rise to concerns that the U.S. economy is at risk of an episode of stagflation. Stagflation describes an economy that is characterized by high rates of both unemployment and inflation. The term came into popular use in the 1970s to describe the economy at that time. Even though recent unemployment and inflation rates are not nearly as high as they were in the 1970s, some economists fear that the recent expansion in monetary and fiscal policy at a time when unemployment is low but rising and energy prices are rising, could lead to a new bout of stagflation in the near future.

WHILE DOHA SLEEPS: SECURING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH TRADE FACILITATION. CATO Institute. Daniel Ikenson. June 17, 2008

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.freetrade.org/files/pubs/pas/tpa-037.pdf> [PDF format, 24 pages]

The report states that improving the international trading system does not require a new, comprehensive multilateral agreement. The trade facilitation includes reforms aimed at improving the chain of administrative and physical procedures involved in the transport of goods and services across international borders. Countries with

inadequate trade infrastructure, burdensome administrative processes, or limited competition in trade logistics services are less capable of benefiting from the opportunities of expanding global trade. Companies interested in investing, buying, or selling in local markets are less likely to bother if there are too many frictions related to document processing or cargo inspection at customs, antiquated port facilities, logistics bottlenecks, or limited reliability of freight or trade-financing services.

WHY NOT A “SUPER SIMPLE” SAVING PLAN FOR THE UNITED STATES? Urban Institute. Pamela Perun and C. Eugene Steuerle. Web posted June 8, 2008

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411676_simple_saving.pdf [PDF format, 26 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The paper suggests that it is possible to create a “Super Simple” saving plan that would provide a basic, low-cost, easily administrable plan with the potential to increase significantly the retirement assets available to moderate- and middle-income individuals. The basic features of the Super Simple plan resemble the U.K. reform plan, but within a U.S. context. The Super Simple plan would create: solid minimum levels of employer contributions for low- and moderate-income workers, include automatic contribution features for employees who do not formally opt out, remove many of the complex discrimination rules surrounding retirement plans, create a significant government match for savers to replace the largely symbolic match now in existence for only a few taxpayers, and streamline multiple 401(k)-type plans through a simple plan design attractive to employers and employees alike.

WRITER’S STRIKE OF 2007-2008: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION. Milken Institute. Kevin Klowden and Anusuya Chatterjee. Web posted June 8, 2008

http://www.milkeninstitute.org/pdf/writers_strike.pdf [PDF format, 38 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The entertainment industry is still recovering from the effects of the work stoppage and digesting the implications of the new labor agreement. Revenue sharing from digital media was at the heart of the dispute and production was shut down on numerous films and many of television’s most popular shows. The writers’ strike has also had significant and lingering effects on television viewers, causing a decline in revenues for the broadcast networks. The report reviews the overall effects of the writers’ strike on California’s economy and the underlying causes of the dispute, examining in particular how the growing market for new media has changed the dynamics of the entertainment industry.

EDUCATION

A MATTER OF DEGREE INITIATIVE TO REDUCE BINGE DRINKING AT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Web posted May 17, 2008

<http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/051308matterofdegree.pdf> [PDF format, 13 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Universities work with surrounding communities to gauge the effectiveness of an environmental approach to alcohol abuse prevention and reduce negative consequences of high-risk drinking. The initiative was conducted across 10 university-community sites to reduce campus alcohol abuse and related outcomes. The environmental model used in this study increased awareness on campuses and in communities that collaboration could bring about change in alcohol abuse on campus. The study recommends bringing higher-level leaders from the campus and community into the initiative, the recruitment and retention of project staff, and advocacy with media and applying communication techniques.

ACCESS, ADEQUACY, AND EQUITY IN EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY. National Education Association. Web posted June 11, 2008

<http://www.nea.org/research/images/08gainsandgapsedtech.pdf> [PDF format, 72 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Over the past decade, the public education system has made great strides in infusing technology into the

classroom. Evidence shows that technology improves efficiency among educators and increases motivation in students. The study examines the distribution of technology and emphasizes the need for education policymakers and administrators to remain committed to the implementation of technology in schools. The findings for various demographic groupings also highlight the disparities found in different community types, school levels, and career stages of educators on their technology and support. Recommendations are offered to help guide policymakers in all levels of administration toward ensuring that educators and students have adequate opportunities to use technology effectively as an instructional tool.

EDUCATION AND TECH ENTREPRENEURSHIP. Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Vivek Wadhwa et al. May 2008
http://www.kauffman.org/pdf/Education_Tech_Ent_042908.pdf [PDF format, 16 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The popular image of American tech entrepreneurs is that they come from elite universities. Some graduate and start companies in their garages, while others drop out of college to start their business careers. The dot-com boom reinforced the image of technology CEOs being young and brash. But, even though Bill Gates and Steve Jobs founded two of the world's most successful companies, they are not representative of technology and engineering company founders. A larger proportion of tech founders are middle-aged, well- educated in business or technical disciplines, with degrees from a wide assortment of schools.

THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT DURING SCHOOL ON COLLEGE STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. National Bureau of Economic Research. Jeffrey S. DeSimone. May 2008
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w14006.pdf> [PDF format, 40 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Many high school and college students work part-time. Employment during school could improve grades if working fosters industriousness or time management skills, or instead reduce grades by constraining time and energy available for schoolwork. These results are consistent with what some college instructors regularly experience: students who blame their class tardiness and absence, failure to submit assignments and poor exam performance on their employment obligations. The study also suggests that the negative outcomes are not simply attributable to less academically motivated students working long hours. The lackluster students would not necessarily perform better academically if they were prevented from working. Instead, students who spend longer hours in paid labor because of preferences or budget constraints ultimately perform worse in school than they otherwise would.

WHERE THE GIRLS ARE: THE FACTS ABOUT GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION. American Association of University Women. Christianne Corbett et al. May 2008.
<http://www.aauw.org/research/upload/whereGirlsAre.pdf> [PDF format, 124 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The authors examine a comprehensive look at girls' educational achievement during the past 35 years, paying special attention to the relationship between girls' and boys' progress. Analyses of results from national standardized tests and other measures of educational achievement provide an overall picture of trends in gender equity from elementary school to college and beyond. These analyses support three overarching facts about gender equity in schools today. Girls' successes don't come at boys' expense. On average, girls' and boys' educational performance has improved. The authors note that the real crisis is that of the African American, Hispanic, and low-income children.

ENVIRONMENT

DOES RAIL TRANSIT SAVE ENERGY OR REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS? Cato Institute. Randal O'Toole. Web posted May 3, 2008
<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-615.pdf> [PDF format, 24 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Even though most rail transit system uses less energy than buses, it is heavily supplemented by extensive feeder

bus operations, with very low number of users. Therefore, most rail transit systems end up using more energy per passenger mile. Many decades of energy savings would be needed to repay the energy cost of rail transit system construction. Even with the attempts to improve the environment by changing people's behavior so that they drive less, such behavioral efforts have been far less successful than technical solutions to toxic air pollution associated with automobiles.

DON'T KILL THE GREEN GOOSE. Institute for Policy Innovation. Chris S. Israel. Web posted June 2, 2008
[http://www.ipi.org/ipi/IPIPublications.nsf/PublicationLookupFullTextPDF/B3E53F7E7905DEF18625745C0074EDEA/\\$File/GreenTech.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.ipi.org/ipi/IPIPublications.nsf/PublicationLookupFullTextPDF/B3E53F7E7905DEF18625745C0074EDEA/$File/GreenTech.pdf?OpenElement) [PDF format, 2 pages]
[Note: contains copyrighted material]

According to the analysis, the clean energy revolution will only reach its full potential in solving our energy needs worldwide if there is determination to promote and protect the intellectual property (IP) that makes green technology possible. The need to achieve technological breakthroughs to provide cleaner, more efficient, cheaper and more abundant sources of energy may be the race-to-the-moon for this generation of American inventors, scientists and entrepreneurs. It is noted that the "green tech" industry is today where the semiconductor industry was 35 years ago and where the biotech industry was 25 years ago.

ENDANGERED AND THREATENED WILDLIFE AND PLANTS: DETERMINATION OF THREATENED STATUS FOR THE POLAR BEAR (URSUS MARITIMUS) THROUGHOUT ITS RANGE. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior. Scott Schliebe and Kurt Johnson. May 14, 2008
http://www.doi.gov/issues/polar_bears/Polar%20Bear%20Final%20Rule_to%20FEDERAL%20REGISTE%20-Final_05-14-08.pdf [PDF format, 368 pages]

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined threatened status for the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as 2 amended (Act) (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Polar bears utilize the Arctic sea ice niche and are distributed throughout most ice-covered seas of the Northern Hemisphere. The Service finds that polar bear habitat, principally sea ice, is declining throughout the species' range. This decline is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, threatening the species throughout all of its range. The special rule for the polar bear sets out the prohibitions and exceptions which apply to the threatened species.

EXPERT OPINION ON THE ECONOMICS OF POLICY OPTIONS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE. U.S. Government Accountability Office. Web posted June 9, 2008
<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08605.pdf> [PDF format, 81 pages]
Elevated levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the resulting effects on the earth's climate could have significant environmental and economic impacts in the United States and internationally. Potential impacts include rising sea levels and a shift in the intensity and frequency of floods and storms. Proposed responses to climate change include adapting to the possible impacts by planning and improving protective infrastructure, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions directly through regulation or the promotion of low-emissions technologies.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GREEN ECONOMY. Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts. Robert Pollin and Jeannette Wicks-Lim. June 2008
http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/atf/cf/%7B3637E5F0-D0EA-46E7-BB32-74D973EFF334%7D/NRDC_report_May28.pdf [PDF format, 15 pages]
[Note: contains copyrighted material]
This report provides a snapshot of what kinds of jobs are needed to build a green economy in the United States. The six green strategies examined by the report are: building retrofitting, mass transit, energy-efficient automobiles, wind power, solar power, and cellulosic biomass fuels. The report shows that the vast majority of jobs associated with these six green strategies are in the same areas of employment that people already work in to-day, in every region and state of the country. It is clear that millions of U.S. workers will all benefit from the project of defeating global warming and transforming the United States into a green economy.

STATE AND TRENDS OF THE CARBON MARKET 2008. World Bank. Karan Capoor and Philippe Ambrosi. May 2008.
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NEWS/Resources/State&Trendsformatted06May10pm.pdf> [PDF format, 78 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The global carbon market grew to a US\$64 billion in 2007, more than doubling over 2006, according to this World Bank report. The European Union Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) also saw a doubling of both value and number of allowances transacted to a US\$50 billion. The report's data shows that the global carbon market doubled or tripled in value for all segments, except for projects in developing countries. It cautions that market momentum may be at a crossroads for many developing countries just as they are beginning to reap the benefits of carbon finance and are stepping forward to show that they are making efforts to mitigate climate change through advancing clean energy technology.

GLOBAL ISSUES

STATE OF THE WORLD'S MOTHERS 2008: CLOSING THE SURVIVAL GAP FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5. Save the Children. Web posted June 2008

<http://www.savethechildren.org/publications/mothers/2008/SOWM-2008-full-report.pdf> [PDF format, 56 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Worldwide, more than 200 million children under age 5 do not get the basic health care they need. This contributes to nearly 10 million children dying needlessly every year from highly preventable or treatable ailments such as diarrhea and pneumonia. While there has been significant progress in reducing the overall death toll among children under age 5 in recent decades, death rates among the poorest of the poor have not improved nearly so well, and in some countries they have gotten worse. These widening health care inequities unfairly condemn millions of the world's poorest children to early death or a lifetime of ill health. The report examines where the health care gaps between the poorest and best-off children are widest, and where they are smallest. It examines how millions of children's lives could be saved by ensuring all children get essential, low-cost health care.

HEALTH

CHEMICAL CUISINE: A GUIDE TO FOOD ADDITIVES. Center for Science in the Public Interest. Web posted May 5, 2008

<http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/additives.pdf> [PDF format, 7 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

If a waiter offered you some BHT in a restaurant, you'd probably decline. However, that chemical is one of scores of hard-to-pronounce additives that routinely show up in the fine print on packaged foods' ingredients lists. Is BHT safe? For the record, food manufacturers use it to keep oils from going rancid, but animal studies differ on whether it promotes or prevents cancer. The Center for Science in the Public Interest says it warrants caution.

EMPLOYER HEALTH COSTS IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY: A COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE FOR U.S. FIRMS. New America Foundation. Len M. Nichols and Sarah Axen. May 2008

<http://www.newamerica.net/files/EMPLOYER%20HEALTH%20COSTS%20IN%20A%20GLOBAL%20ECONOMY.pdf> [PDF format, 15 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Most Americans get health insurance through their employers. Business leaders are increasingly united in their belief that rising health care costs threaten America's competitiveness in the global economy, and business support for comprehensive health reform has been growing as a result. However, economists generally believe that it is workers, rather than employers, who pay for health care through lower wages. A new model for health care that includes appropriate subsidies for those who need them and is individual, rather than employer-based, would enable us to finance our 21st-century health system in a more sustainable and competitive way.

EVIDENCE ON THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. Congressional Budget Office. May 12, 2008.

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/91xx/doc9168/05-20-HealthIT.pdf> [PDF format, 48 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Information plays a key role in health care. Providers such as physicians and hospitals generate and process information as they provide care to patients. Managing that information and using it productively pose a continuing challenge, particularly in light of the complexity of the U.S. health care sector. Health information technology (health IT) has the potential to increase the efficiency of the health sector by helping providers manage information. It could also improve the quality of health care and, ultimately, the outcomes of that care for patients. The term “health IT” generally refers to computer applications for the practice of medicine.

GLOBAL HIV/AIDS: A MORE COUNTRY-BASED APPROACH COULD IMPROVE ALLOCATION OF PEPFAR FUNDING.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. Web posted April 29, 2008

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08480.pdf> [PDF format, 73 pages]

The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) provides assistance for combating HIV/AIDS around the world, with global targets for prevention, treatment, and care. The “Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria Act of 2003,” which authorized the \$15 billion program, contains directives to guide the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator’s allocation of this funding. The act expires in September 2008. The President has announced his intention to ask Congress to authorize \$30 billion for these efforts for the next 5 years.

QUICK HEALTH FACTS 2008: A COMPILATION OF SELECTED STATE DATA. AARP Public Policy Institute. Leigh Purvis and Lynda Flowers. Web posted May 11, 2008

http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/health/d18971_healthfacts.pdf [PDF format, 66 pages]

The report looks at each state’s health care by providing comparable state-level and national data for over 30 indicators. Data are presented for each state and the District of Columbia in regard to demographics, Medicare, Medicaid, and health insurance coverage.

ROLLING BACK MALARIA: RHETORIC AND REALITY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST A DEADLY KILLER. Health Policy Outlook, American Enterprise Institute. Roger Bate. Web posted May 5, 2008

http://www.aei.org/docLib/20080423_0423023HPOBateApril_g.pdf [PDF format, 9 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

For the past thirty years, the fight against malaria has been long on rhetoric and short on action. The Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership, launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) ten years ago in 1998, continued this trend. However, since 2005, U.S. government made striving efforts in improving malaria control. While significant problems still remain, for the first time since the 1960s, malaria is being fought effectively on a global scale.

THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA: PROGRESS REPORT AND ISSUES FOR CONGRESS. Congressional Research Service, RL33396, Library of Congress. Tiaji Salaam-Blyther. Web posted May 27, 2008.

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL33396_20080414.pdf [PDF format, 22 pages]

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is an independent foundation that seeks to gather and disburse new resources in developing countries aimed at countering the three diseases. The Fund is a financing vehicle, not an implementing agency, with the United States as the largest single contributor to the Global Fund. This report discusses the Fund’s progress to date.

THE WORLD BANK’S COMMITMENT TO HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA. World Bank. May 2008.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRREGTOPHIVAIDS/Resources/WB_HIV-AIDS-AFA_2007-2011_Advance_Copy.pdf [PDF format, 146 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The World Bank is committed to support Sub-Saharan Africa in responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This Agenda for Action (AFA) is a road map for the next five years to guide Bank management and staff in fulfilling that

commitment. It underscores the lessons learned and outlines a line of action. About 22.5 million Africans are HIV positive, and AIDS is the leading cause of premature death on the continent. HIV/AIDS affects young people and women disproportionately. As a result of the epidemic, an estimated 11.4 million children under age 18 have lost at least one parent. Its impact on households, human capital, the private sector, and the public sector undermines the alleviation of poverty, the Bank's overarching mandate.

LAW ENFORCEMENT / SECURITY / ILLEGAL DRUGS

2007 WIRETAP REPORT. U.S. Courts. Web posted May 2, 2008

<http://www.uscourts.gov/wiretap07/2007WTText.pdf> [PDF format, 11 pages]

A total of 2,208 intercepts authorized by federal and state courts were completed in 2007, an increase of 20 percent compared to the number in 2006. The number of applications for orders by federal authorities fell less than 1 percent to 457. The number of applications reported by state prosecuting officials grew 27 percent to 1,751, with 24 states providing reports, 1 more than in 2006. Installed wiretaps were in operation an average of 44 days per wiretap in 2007, compared to 40 days in 2006.

GANGS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. Congressional Research Service, RL34112, Library of Congress. Clare Ribando Seelke. Web posted May 10, 2008.

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34112_20080327.pdf [PDF format, 21 pages]

The Congress maintains an interest in the effects of crime and gang violence in Central America and its spillover effects on the United States. Since February 2005, more than 1,758 alleged members of the violent Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang have been arrested in cities across the United States. These arrests have raised concerns about the transnational activities of Central American gangs, and governments throughout the region are working to find the right combination of suppressive and preventive policies to deal with them. An inter-agency committee worked together to develop a U.S. Strategy to Combat Criminal Gangs from Central America and Mexico.

IDENTITY THEFT: THE AFTERMATH 2007. Identity Theft Resource Center. Linda Foley and Sheila Gordon. Web posted June 14, 2008

http://www.idtheftcenter.org/artman2/uploads/1/Aftermath_2007_20080529v2_2.pdf [PDF format, 37 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

The primary purpose of the study is to identify what the impact of identity theft is to the victim. The victims' lives have been interrupted, altered, torn apart and/or impacted for years to come. The study indicates a need for research on various topics including family identity theft, long-term emotional impacts of this crime on victims, child identity theft, and the criminal elements involved in identity theft. The questions asked ranged from the emotional impact this crime has had on victims' lives all the way through to their ability to recover their good name. It also includes the financial loss to the business community in goods and services.

PROTECT CHILDREN NOT GUNS. Children's Defense Fund. Web posted June 9, 2008.

http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/DocServer/Gun_report_2008.pdf?docID=7581 [PDF format, 15 pages]

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

According to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 3,006 children and teens were killed by firearms in 2005, the first increase since 1994 and the first rise in gun deaths since Congress allowed the Assault Weapons Ban to expire in 2004. The report recommends what individuals, communities and policymakers can do to reverse the increase in gun violence.

REMOVING ALIENS FROM THE UNITED STATES: JUDICIAL REVIEW OF REMOVAL ORDERS. Congressional Research Service, RL34444, Library of Congress. Yule Kim. Web posted May 9, 2008

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34444_20080414.pdf [PDF format, 19 pages]

Aliens may be removed from the United States for a variety of reasons, such as entering into the country unlawfully, overstaying a visa, or committing a crime. However, aliens usually have access to a removal hearing or

adjudication that determines whether an alien is subject to removal. Although judicial review by a federal court of appeals of a removal order is generally available, Congress has denied the federal courts jurisdiction to review many types of removals. Congress specifically preserved the jurisdiction of the courts of appeals to review constitutional claims and questions of law for all removals, even those arising from an area where judicial review is generally barred. The report shifts through the jurisdictional thicket created by the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) by focusing on the procedural mechanisms used to initiate judicial review.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT. Department of State. June 2008

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105501.pdf> [PDF format, 295 pages]

Millions of men, women, and children around the world will have their lives ruined by human traffickers. This form of modern-day slavery shocks the conscience of every civilized nation. The 2008 annual report is the most comprehensive to date, covering 170 countries. It brings to account each nation's efforts to discover the perpetrators, prosecute the criminals, protect the victims, and ultimately abolish the egregious crime of human trafficking. The report is a key tool in the efforts to abolish human trafficking, by raising awareness, offering clear recommendations to combat these crimes, and offering advice and aid from the United States.